

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
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R 181614Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5762
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
USMISSION USNATO
DIA WASH DC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS BEL
COMUSFORAZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 3712

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PO
SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL ROLE IN THE COMING MONTHS

REF: LISBON 3120

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT EANES CONTINUES TO BE A STABILIZING
FACTOR AGAINST THE POLARIZING FORCES AT WORK IN PORTUGAL.
HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE HIS ROLE ON THE AZORES,
INCLUDING BASE NEGOTIATIONS; ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM;
AGRARIAN REFORM; PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR ISSUES;
AND FOREIGN POLICY GENERALLY. EANES'S INFLUENCE
WILL INEVITABLY GROW AS THE GOVERNMENT COMES UNDER
INCREASING PRESSURE DURING THE AUSTERITY PERIOD. HE HAS
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AMPLE AUTHORITY TO PLAY A STEPPED-UP ROLE AND THE GOOD
SENSE NOT BE DRAWN IN OVER HIS HEAD. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESSURE ON THE PRESIDENT: IN RECENT MONTHS,
PRESSURES ON THE PRESIDENT TO ASSUME A MORE ACTIVE ROLE
HAVE INCREASED. ON THE ONE HAND, THE CIVILIAN AND
MILITARY RIGHT LED BY SA CARNEIRO AND LAULZA DE ARRIAGA

HAVE CRITICIZED EANES FOR ALLEGEDLY FAVORING THE SOCIALIST PARTY, BEING DOMINATED BY THE "MELOANTUNISTAS" ON THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, RESTRICTING HIS CIRCLE OF ADVISERS, AND REFUSING TO LEAD A PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM. A SEPARATE COLLECTION OF POLITICIANS, ACADEMICS, AND JOURNALISTS INCLUDING FORMER FOREIGN AND AGRICULTURE MINISTERS MEDEIROS FERREIRA AND BARRETO, PSD MODERATES ALFREDO DE SOUSA AND FIGUEIREDO DIAS, AND CDS DEPUTY LUCAS PIRES HAVE ALSO ARGUED FOR A STRONGER PRESIDENTIAL ROLE. THIS LOOSE COLLECTION OF "PRESIDENTIALISTS" HAS NOT CRITICIZED EANES DIRECTLY, BUT HAS URGED HIM TO RALLY THE NATION TO OVERCOME PORTUGAL'S SERIOUS ECONOMIC CRISIS. PROPONENTS OF A MORE ACTIVE PRESIDENTIAL ROLE ARE MOTIVATED BY A VARIETY OF FACTORS RANGING FROM AMBITION AND PERSONAL PIQUE TO GENUINE CONCERNS. THE PRESIDENT'S VOCAL CRITICS AND THE "PRESIDENTIALISTS" FREQUENTLY CLASH, BUT BOTH GROUPS HAVE STIMULATED PRESSURE FOR EANES TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE.

2. AMPLE AUTHORITY: DUE TO CRITICISM FROM THE RIGHT AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF SOME PORTUGUESE THAT THEIR PRESIDENT SINGLE-HANDEDLY WOULD RESOLVE ALL THEIR PROBLEMS, EANES POPULARITY HAS DECLINED. HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT STILL ENJOYS THE SUPPORT OF POLITICAL PARTIES REPRESENTING THE MAJORITY OF THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE AND THE RESPECT OF MOST PORTUGUESE. BY VIRTUE OF HIS ELECTION AND HIS STRICT CONFIDENTIAL

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ADHERENCE TO DEMOCRATIC NORMS, EANES RETAINS AMPLE AUTHORITY TO FULFILL HIS PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES. EANES'S POPULARITY WITHIN THE MILITARY HAS SUFFERED SOMEWHAT AS A RESULT OF SOME DIFFICULT DECISIONS AS ARMED FORCES CHIEF, E. G. THE REMOVAL OF ROCHA VIEIRA AND VASCO LOURENCO. EANES NEVERTHELESS HAS TO RESTORE MILITARY DISCIPLINE; HE HAS PLACED LOYAL COMMANDERS AT THE HEAD OF KEY UNITS; AND HE HAS CONTINUED TO REINFORCE THE PRINCIPLES OF MILITARY HIERARCHY. EANES CAN COUNT ON THE LOYALTY OF HIS ARMED FORCES SUBORDINATES IN AN EMERGENCY.

3. INCREASED PRESIDENTIAL ROLE: DURING HIS FIRST TWO YEARS IN OFFICE, PRESIDENT EANES KEPT A LOW PROFILE EXERTING HIS INFLUENCE FROM BEHIND THE SCENES. THAT IS STILL HIS STYLE, BUT HIS TOUGH APRIL 25 SPEECH (REFTEL) AND SUBSEQUENT ACTIVITIES SIGNAL A MORE DYNAMIC ROLE. --IN A MAY 14 TRIP TO RURAL CASTELO BRANCO PROVINCE, EANES CRITICIZES THE GOVERNMENT FOR NOT MOVING MORE RAPIDLY ON A DAM PROJECT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LISBON 3712

EANES TOOK THE INITIATIVE MAY 11 TO GRANT PERMISSION
FOR ELDERLY FORMER PRESIDENT TOMAZ TO RETURN TO PORTUGAL.
--EANES IS BUILDING SIGNIFICANT FOREIGN POLICY CONTENT INTO
HIS UPCOMING TRIP TO BRAZIL, VENEZUELA, AND THE NATO
SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON

4. EANES'S CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT
IN HIS APRIL 25 SPEECH PROVOKED CONCERN AMONG THE
COALITION PARTNERS. BOTH PS AND CDS LEADERS WERE WORRIED THAT
THE PRESIDENT MIGHT UNDERCUT THE GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, SUCH
TENSIONS AND JOCKEYING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENCY AND THE GOV-
ERNMENT ARE NATURAL TO PORTUGAL'S SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM.
TENSIONS HAVE ARISEN BEFORE, AND THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO
ARISE AGAIN. THE GOVERNMENT WILL SEEK PUBLIC REAFFIRMATIONS OF
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PRESIDENTIAL DURING THE DIFFICULT MONTHS AHEAD. HOWEVER, THE

PRESIDENT WHILE GUARANTEEING CONDITIONS TO GOVERN,
WILL ALSO INSIST UPON MAINTAINING HIS SEPARATE IDENTITY.

5. AREAS OF INFLUENCE: EANES IS LIKELY TO INCREASE HIS
ROLE AND INFLUENCE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

--THE AZORES: MOTIVATED BY HIS ANXIETY TO UNDERCUT
SEPARATIST SENTIMENT AND PRESERVE NATIONAL UNITY, EANES
HAS TAKEN A STRONG INTEREST IN THE AZORES AND MADEIRA; HE
HAS DESIGNATED DEFENSE MINISTER FIRMINO MIGUEL AND
REVOLUTIONARY COUNSELOR ALMEIDA E COSTA TO SPECIAL
COORDINATING JOBS. EANES ALSO MEETS WITH AZOREAN REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL REGULARLY. EANES IN HIS
APRIL 25 SPEECH PRODDED ALL SIDES TO AVOID PARTISAN
EXPLOITATION OF AUTONOMY ISSUES, HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO
EXERT A STRONG INFLUENCE, WHEN NEEDED, ON THE LAJES BASE
NEGOTIATION, AUTONO AND SEPARATISM ISSUES.

--FOREIGN POLICY: EANES HAS AN AMBITIOUS TRAVEL SCHEDULE
FOR THIS YEAR WITH TRIPS TO WASHINGTON, BRAZIL, VENEZUELA,
CAPE VERDE, AND GREAT BRITAIN ALREADY ON THE AGENDA.
HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO USE HIS TRAVEL AND THE VISITS OF
FOREIGN HEADS OF STATE TO PRESS THE SOARES GOVERNMENT FOR
RESOLUTION OF CONTENTIOUS ISSUES.

-- ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM: EANES HAS REPEATEDLY PRESSED FOR
PROGRESS ON ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM. HE PRODDED THE GOVERNMENT
AGAIN ON APRIL 25 AND WILL STEP UP THE PRESSURE.

-- AGRARIAN REFORM: EANES GAVE STRONG ACKING TO FORMER
AGRICULTURE MINISTER ANTONIO BARRETO'S AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS
TO CORRECT AGRARIAN REFORM ABUSES. HE CRITICIZED THE GOVERN-
MENT ON APRIL 25 FOR NOT CARRYING OUT THE LAW, AND
WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW.

--PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR ISSUES: ON APRIL 25 AND IN OTHER
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RECENT SPEECHES, EANES HAS COME OUT FOR AN EXPANDED ROLE
FOR PRIVATE INITIATIVE. HE WILL KEEP UP THE PRESSURE
ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ISSUE IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS ON
INDEMNIZATION FOR NATIONALIZED PROPERTIES AND TO INCREASE
INCENTIVES TO PRIVATE INITIATIVE.

6. EANES WILL CONTINUE TO RESIST
PRESSURES FROM UNDEMOCRATIC FORCES ON THE RIGHT
AND LEFT. HE WILL ACT AS A STABILIZING FORCE TO KEEP THE
GOVERNMENT TOGETHER WHEN TENSIONS BETWEEN PS AND CDS
THREATEN. EANES WILL ALSO BE A SOURCE OF STRENGTH AS THE
ECONOMIC GOING GETS TOUGH - HIS PERSONAL AUSTERITY WILL
SERVE AS A MODEL FOR THE AUSTERITY BEING ASKED THE NATION.
EANES HAS ADOPTED A MORE CONSERVATIVE STANCE IN RECENT MONTHS
AS PRESSURES FROM THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE SPECTRUM GROW.
HE REMAINS, HOWEVER, FIRMLY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE POLITICAL

SPECTRUM. A STRONG DEFENDER OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.
BLOOMFIELD

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